

health care system during a catastrophic emergency.

Specifically, PHERA would provide a temporary emergency health benefit for uninsured individuals and individuals whose health insurance coverage is not actuarially equivalent to benchmark coverage, in the event that the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) declares that a public health emergency exists and chooses to activate the benefit. It would clarify who is eligible for this benefit, including individuals displaced by a public health emergency, limit the amount of time for which the benefit would last, and stipulate what providers would be covered under this Act. It would not use Medicare, Medicaid or SCHIP funding. The funding mechanism would be the Public Health Emergency Fund, a no-year fund available to the Secretary. The bill authorizes funding for the administration of the fund, together with a public education campaign on the availability of the benefit, but further funding would not be necessary until Congress appropriated funds in the event of a declared public health emergency.

Past experiences have shown that Congress will step in to help defray the costs of uncompensated care resulting from a catastrophic emergency. Determining the scope of such coverage ahead of time will help ensure the solvency of our health care system and help eliminate a disincentive for individuals to promptly seek care. PHERA would help ensure that when tragedy strikes, time and lives are not lost as Congress debates a course of action. It would create the turnkey process ahead of time, thereby allowing for timely care to individuals affected by a crisis.

We appreciate your leadership in introducing this legislation and look forward to working with you on this and other public health initiatives in the future.

Sincerely,

American Red Cross.

CENTER FOR BIOSECURITY,

University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy.

Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists.

Infectious Diseases Society of America.

National Association of Community Health Centers.

Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America.

Trust for America's Health.

TRIBUTE TO DON BETTS

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2008

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Don Betts as the recipient of the 2008 Educator of the Year from the Iowa Association of Alternative Education and for his outstanding service as a teacher and director at Carrie Lane Alternative School in Charles City, Iowa.

The Educator of the Year award is presented each year to an alternative educator who makes a significant contribution to alternative education in Iowa. Don currently is the only teacher at Carrie Lane. He understands that in alternative education, relationships based on encouragement are necessary, and he continues to build upon those relationships well after graduation. His hard work and motivational skills have helped many students per-

severe and earn their high school diplomas, and the confidence he instills in his students opens doors to learning opportunities and future success.

I congratulate Don Betts on his well-deserved award, and I'm certain that he will continue to touch the lives of many students in his community. It is a great honor to represent Don in the United States Congress, and I wish him continued success at Carrie Lane Alternative School.

COMMEMORATION OF THE 34TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INVASION OF CYPRUS

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2008

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, 34 years ago, Turkish troops invaded the Island of Cyprus, resulting in the death and displacement of thousands of Greek and Turkish Cypriot citizens; leaving behind a state of conflict within a civilization that can trace its history back more than ten thousand years. A 113-mile long divide was created as the Turks began their occupation of one third of the island, which exists to present day.

Today, we recognize this tragic event, but we also look at, with hope, the future that lies ahead.

As part of a congressional delegation last November, other members of Congress and I discussed this long-standing conflict and the path toward resolution with members of the Cyprus government. I am encouraged by the recent overtures made by leaders on both sides of the Cyprus question.

I am hopeful that the meetings between President Christofias and Mr. Talat will continue, and that the work of the mutually established Working Groups and Technical Communities may ultimately lead to a unified Cypriot nation.

I am confident that through tolerance, compromise and the continuation of diplomatic efforts, lasting solutions to the remaining differences will be attained.

HONORING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF CAPTAIN SCOTT J. FERGUSON

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2008

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the significant achievements of Captain Scott J. Ferguson whose service with the U.S. Coast Guard Sector Buffalo were concluded today during a change of command ceremony on 1 Fuhrmann Blvd.

As the Commander of the United States Coast Guard Sector Buffalo, Captain Scott J. Ferguson was responsible for a 570 mile coastline stretching from Massena, NY, to Vermillion, OH, including three of the five finger lakes, St. Lawrence River, Niagara River, Lake Erie, Lake Ontario and the Erie Barge Canal. Captain Ferguson has been awarded three Meritorious Service Medals, three Coast Guard Commendation Medals, a Navy

Achievement Medal, and the Transportation 9-11 Medal, along with many others.

Captain Ferguson has done a great deal for Sector Buffalo during his time as Commander. He always made it his mission to ensure the complete safety of those in his area of responsibility. He ensured that all personnel working in Sector Buffalo were properly trained and equipped to handle any emergency situation. Captain Ferguson continually worked on fulfilling his firm belief that Sector Buffalo was the "gatekeeper" of the Great Lakes.

Captain Ferguson truly worked on promoting safe boating practices. In doing so, Captain Ferguson hosted a Safe Boating Week in Sector Buffalo to educate citizens on safe water and boating practices. In addition, he created the Annual Eastern Great Lakes Water Safety Expo, which included safety demonstrations, free recreation vessel inspections and tours of the Sector Buffalo Coast Guard base and the Buffalo Lighthouse.

Captain Ferguson will be leaving to serve as the chief of prevention at the Seventh Coast Guard District in Miami. Madam Speaker, I ask you to join me in thanking Captain Scott Ferguson for all that he has done for Western New York and Sector Buffalo and wish him every success in his future.

RECOGNIZING THE 34TH COMMEMORATION OF THE TURKISH INVASION OF CYPRUS

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2008

Mr. ANDREWS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the people of Cyprus who have experienced an illegal occupation that has divided their nation for the last 34 years. On July 20, 1974, an unlawful Turkish invasion created a division between the northern and southern parts of the island. This division still exists today despite the best efforts of the United Nations to broker a solution. However, I am encouraged by recent events that the reunification of Cyprus is now a real possibility.

The Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 was followed by widespread condemnation in the international community. The invasion and occupation drove nearly 200,000 Greek Cypriots from their homes. Sadly, about 5,000 Cypriots were killed in the attack and 1,400 Greek Cypriots remain missing and unaccounted for. Nearly a decade after the attack, Turkey advanced a "unilateral declaration of independence" in the northern area of the island occupied by the Turkish military. In response, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 541, which denounced the claim of an independent state and called for the withdrawal of the declaration.

I am greatly encouraged by the progress currently being accomplished in Cyprus. At his inauguration this February, incoming Cypriot President Demetris Christofias announced that solving the Cyprus problem is going to be the first priority of his government. In response, the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, Mehmet Ali Talat, said that a solution in Cyprus is possible by the end of 2008.

The current state of affairs in Cyprus presents an opportunity for the United States to show leadership by working together with the